

## Message Text

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53

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9221

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNATO BRUSSELS 0351

USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

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E. O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR

XA, TAU, UN, NATO, NI, US

SUBJECT: NIGRIAN PRESS REACTION TO OSLO CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: NEWSPAPER COMMENT ON OSLO CONFERENCE WAS UNUSUALLY SPARSE AND RESTRAINED, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF REMOTENESS OF VENUE AND SURFEIT OF RECENT MEETINGS DEDICATED TO TALKING APARTHEID TO DEATH. CRITICISM OF US, UK AND FRANCE WAS HALF- HEARTED BY LOCAL JOURNALISTIC STANDARDS. END SUMMARY.

2. NIGERIAN DAILY TIMES CARRIED ALMOST DAILY WIRE SERVICE-BASED REPORTS DURING OSLO CONFERENCE ON APARTHEID AND COLONIALISM, AND RENAISSANCE HAD SIMILAR REPORT APRIL 12. REPORTS NOTED US, UK AND FRANCE ABSENCE FROM CONFERENCE, AND CARRIED EXTRACTS INDIVIDUAL SPEECHES CHASTIZING US FOR ABSENCE, BUT INCLUDED OUR EXPLANATION FOR NOT ATTENDING.  
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SIMILARLY, EXTRACTS OF SOME DELEGATES' SPEECHES ATTACKING NATO WERE BALANCED BY NORWEGIAN FONMIN' S ASSERTION THAT NATO AS AN ORGANIZATION DID NOT SUPPLY ARMS. REPORTS ON DELEGATES' ATTACKS ON BRITAIN, FRANCE AND US FOR ALLEGEDLY SUPPORTING SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIMES, AND QUOTES FROM BLOOD-THIRSTY RHETORIC OF EGYPTIAN, CHINESE, GHANAIAN AND LIBERATION FRONT REPS, WERE NOT OFFSET BY COUNTER ASSERTIONS. ARTICLES CARRIED LARGE AND SOMETIMES SENSATIONAL HEADINGS, BUT WERE LOCATED ON INSIDE PAGES. SOME NIGERIAN PAPERS IGNORED EVENT.

3. THERE HAVE BEEN NO EDITORIALS ABOUT THE CONFERENCE, AND ONLY TWO SIGNED ARTICLES HAVE MENTIONED IT. AN OBSERVER COMMENTATOR WROTE OPTIMISTICALLY THAT PEOPLES OF BRITAIN, NEW ZEALAND AND ARGENTINA HAD " CAUGHT THE ANTI- APARTHEID VIRUS" , AND NOTED " SIGNIFICANT AND TELLING DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN AND WITHOUT SOUTH AFRICA WHICH MAKE ANY SANGUINE FEELING ABOUT THE IMMUTABILITY OF APARTHEID UNTENABLE ." ON QUESTION OF ATTENDANCE, HE WROTE: " AS EXPECTED THE LEADING NATO COUNTRIES SUCH AS BRITAIN, AMERICA AND FRANCE, WHICH BRAZENLY COLLABORATE WITH SOUTH AFRICA IN THE SUBJUGATION AND ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF AFRICANS, WERE NOT PRESENT AT THE MEETING."

4. RENAISSANCE ANALYST ALSO ACCEPTED US, UK AND FRANCE ABSENCE AS INDICATIVE OF NATO POWERS' BACKING OF SA, BUT DREW DIFFERENT AND HERETICAL CONCLUSIONS: THAT " EFFUSIVE, POMPOUS AND THREATENING" STATEMENTS BY BLACK AFRICANS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS ONLY HARDEN THE ATTITUDE OF RACIST REGIMES: THAT SA, EVEN WITHOUT AND CERTAINLY WITH ITS POWERFUL WESTERN ALLIES, IS INFINITELY STRONGER THAN ANY COMBINATION OF WEAK BLACK AFRICAN STATES: AND THAT THE ONLY REASONABLE COURSE FOR BLACK AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS IS " MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE" WITH SA.

5. COMMENT: PRESS REACTION IS UNUSUAL BOTH IN PAUCITY AND BALANCE. NORMALLY, NIGERIAN WRITERS SEIZE ANY OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE IN JOURNALISTIC WAR DANCE ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN QUESTIONS, AND DIALOGUE WITH SA IS ALWAYS CONDEMNED AS SELL- OUT TO RACISTS. LARGE NUMBER OF RECENT AND PAST CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS AND REAMS OF RHETORIC ON RACIAL INJUSTICE MAY HAVE DULLED PRESS AND PUBLIC APPETITE TEMPORARILY. ALSO OSLO IS OBSCURE VENUE FOR NIGERIANS, AND CONFERENCE MAY HAVE BEEN DISMISSED VAGUELY BY MOST AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JUST " MORE PALAVER, NO ACTION."

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